

CLAIMS

What is claimed is:

1. A method, comprising:

(a) splitting a video file into a first piece and a second piece, the video file being a digital representation of a video;

(b) moving the first piece through a cable network to a first building and storing the first piece in the first building on a first storage device;

(c) moving the second piece through the cable network to a second building and storing the second piece in the second building on a second storage device;

(d) moving the first piece from the first storage device through the cable network and into a third building, and storing the first piece in the third building on a third storage device;

(e) moving the second piece from the second storage device through the cable network and into the third building, and storing the second piece in the third building on the third storage device; and

(f) retrieving and displaying the first piece from the third storage device and substantially contiguously retrieving and displaying the second piece from the third storage device such that the video is displayed in the third building as a single unit.

2. The method of Claim 1, wherein the cable network involves fiber optic cables but no coaxial cable.

3. The method of Claim 1, wherein the splitting of (a) occurs in a central cable station.

4. The method of Claim 1, wherein the splitting of (a) occurs in a distribution hub.
5. The method of Claim 1, wherein the splitting of (a) is performed by a content provider, and wherein after the splitting of (a) the first piece and the second piece are supplied to a central cable station.
6. The method of Claim 1, wherein the video file is an MPEG file.
7. The method of Claim 1, wherein the cable network includes: a distribution hub, a first fiber node, a second fiber node, a primary fiber optic network coupled to the distribution hub, a first secondary fiber optic network coupled to the distribution hub and to the first fiber node, a second secondary fiber optic network coupled to the distribution hub and to the second fiber node, a first tertiary network coupled to the first fiber node and extending to the first building and to the second building, and a second tertiary network coupled to the second fiber node and extending to the third building.
8. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first storage device is a first hard disk disposed in a first TV set-top box, and wherein the second storage device is a second hard disk disposed in a second TV set-top box, and wherein the third storage device is a third hard disk disposed in a third TV set-top box.
9. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first storage device is a first persistent storage media disposed in a first

computer, and wherein the second storage device is a second persistent storage media disposed in a second computer, and wherein the third storage device is a third persistent storage media disposed in a third computer.

10. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first storage device is a first memory disposed in a first TV set-top box, and wherein the second storage device is a second memory disposed in a second TV set-top box, and wherein the third storage device is a third memory disposed in a third TV set-top box.

11. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first storage device is disposed in one of the following: a residential gateway, a personal computer, and a TV set-top box; wherein the second storage device is disposed in one of the following: a residential gateway, a personal computer, and a TV set-top box; and wherein the third storage device is disposed in one of the following: a residential gateway, a personal computer, and a TV set-top box.

12. The method of Claim 1, wherein the moving of (d) and the moving of (e) occur substantially simultaneously.

13. The method of Claim 1, wherein the video is displayed in (f) in the third building on a television screen.

14. The method of Claim 1, wherein the first piece moves from the first storage device in (d) with a first data rate DR1, wherein the second piece moves from the second storage device in (e) with a second data rate DR2, wherein the first and second pieces move into the third storage device

in (d) and (e) with a combined data rate CDR, and wherein CDR is equal to or greater than the sum of DR1 and DR2.

15. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

(g) determining a downstream available bandwidth into the third storage device; and

(h) determining a first upstream available bandwidth out of the first storage device and determining a second upstream available bandwidth out of the second storage device; and

(i) based at least in part on (g) and (h), determining from which of the first, second or first and second storage devices pieces of the video file will move through the cable network and to the third storage device.

16. The method of Claim 14, wherein the first piece moves from the first storage device in (d) with a first data rate DR1, wherein the second piece moves from the second storage device in (e) with a second data rate DR2, and wherein the sum of DR1 and DR2 is approximately equal to the downstream available bandwidth determined in (g).

17. The method of Claim 1, further comprising:

(g) viewing a web page on a television screen in the third building;

(h) selecting a link on the web page, the link being indicative of the video; and

(i) in response to the selecting of the link, initiating the moving of (d) and (e).

18. A method, comprising:

(a) receiving a video file from a cable IP network and storing the video file on a TV set-top box, the TV set-top box being coupled to a television having a television screen, the video file being a digital representation of a video;

(b) viewing a user interface;

(c) selecting a link on the user interface, the link being indicative of the video; and

(d) in response to the selecting of the link, retrieving the video file from the TV set-top box and displaying the video on the television screen.

19. The method of Claim 18, wherein the user interface in (b) is displayed on the television screen, and wherein the user interface is taken from the group consisting of: a web page, a Java application, a C program, a Macromedia Flash animation, and a byte-code language supported on an interactive television middleware platform.

20. The method of Claim 18 wherein the user interface in (b) is displayed on a device taken from the group consisting of: a computer monitor, a personal digital assistant (PDA), a cellular telephone with web access, and a wireless device having a screen.

21. A method of using a plurality of hard disks in a plurality of TV set-top boxes as a storage area network,

the plurality of TV set-top boxes being coupled together via a cable television network, the storage area network including a central controller coupled to the cable television network, the central controller maintaining a map of where information is stored on the plurality of hard disks.

22. A method, comprising:

(a) splitting a digital file into a first piece and a second piece;

(b) moving the first piece through a cable network to a first building and storing the first piece in the first building on a first storage device;

(c) moving the second piece through the cable network to a second building and storing the second piece in the second building on a second storage device;

(d) moving the first piece from the first storage device through the cable network and into a third building, and storing the first piece in the third building on a third storage device; and

(e) moving the second piece from the second storage device through the cable network and into the third building, and storing the second piece in the third building on the third storage device.